

Current Issues in Immunization

Successes in Influenza Vaccination Outreach

Through creative approaches, effective communication, and hard work, health care providers and organizations nationwide have effectively increased the rate of influenza vaccination among critical groups. Here are just a few examples of their important efforts.

Sacramento Native American Health Center, Inc.

TARGET POPULATION: NATIVE AMERICANS

Nurse Manager and Immunization Coordinator Christie London encouraged vaccination among the Native American population served by her health center by working with tribal elders and community leaders. As a result of her outreach to this traditionally underserved and hard-to-reach group, immunizations in the clinic nearly doubled from 1,400 to 2,600 over two years.



CDC Healthy Aging Program and SPARC Vote and Vax Clinics

VOTE & VAX

TARGET POPULATION: GENERAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING PEOPLE WHO DON'T ROUTINELY GET VACCINATED

Recognizing that approximately 70 percent of the more than 126 million Americans who vote in national elections are over the age of 50, in 2008 the Vote and Vax Program offered influenza vaccinations at 331 polling places in 42 states and the District of Columbia. Vote and Vax clinics delivered 21,434 flu shots to adults aged 50–64, more than 60 percent of whom were not regular flu vaccine recipients.

Nurses for Newborn Foundation

TARGET POPULATION: AFRICAN AMERICAN PREGNANT WOMEN AND MOTHERS

As part of CDC and Emory University's Interfaith Health Program collaborators, the Nurses for Newborn Foundation in St. Louis, MO, reached out to at-risk young African American pregnant women and mothers through face-to-face visits in their homes. Foundation members delivered vaccine vouchers to 151 young mothers and expectant mothers, along with gas cards and gift bags with flu-related items.

The Montana Diabetes Project

TARGET POPULATION: PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

In an effort to improve influenza vaccination rates among patients with diabetes, participating health care providers in Montana monitored influenza vaccine update in diabetes registries and also had their patients with diabetes complete a vaccine questionnaire at patient visits. Some providers also sent reminder cards to patients. As a result of these reminders, the rate of recorded flu shots among these patients with diabetes went from 43 percent in the 2009–2010 season to 53 percent in the 2010–2011 season.

Fairview Health Services Community Health Outreach

TARGET POPULATION: HISPANICS

A CDC and Emory University Interfaith Health Program example of success, Fairview Health Services Community Health Outreach partnered with St. Mary's Health Clinic to hold 18 vaccination events after Catholic mass. They provided influenza vaccinations to 2,774 Latinos in the community.

Ruben D. Atencio, RPh, CVS Pharmacy

TARGET POPULATION: HISPANICS

Ruben D. Atencio, a CVS pharmacist, worked with Dr. Brian Smith, Texas Department of Health, to increase the availability of vaccination services for a population with an incredibly high need but very low demand. Atencio and Smith worked together to improve vaccination rates in an area of Texas that borders Mexico and serves both American and Mexican citizens. Atencio's practice has expanded beyond his pharmacy to hard-to-reach patients at more than 35 off-site flu clinics at health fairs, adult daycare facilities, assisted living centers, and mobile home RV parks.



Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC)

TARGET POPULATION: NATIVE AMERICANS

Since establishing the Pharmacy-Based Immunization Clinic (PBIC) during the 2007–2008 influenza season, pharmacists Ann Gorman and Aimee Young watched the number of clinic providers grow from two to 38 and the number of annual immunizations increase from 460 to more than 2,300. The clinic's goal is to increase overall immunization rates and improve access for patients, many of whom face transportation issues and live miles away from a health care facility.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation

TARGET POPULATION: HISPANICS

The Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation in Los Angeles worked with 18 faith- and community-based organizations to provide influenza vaccinations to 3,260 Hispanics in the community. The foundation made the vaccination process convenient for its target population by setting up clinics near work settings from 6 to 8 a.m., 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and 6 to 8 p.m.

The Diabetes Ten City Challenge

TARGET POPULATION: PEOPLE WITH DIABETES



The Diabetes 10 City Challenge shows the value of targeting people with chronic conditions for routine preventive care services, in this case through pharmacies. In this program, employers provided employees, dependents, and retirees with diabetes a voluntary health benefit, waived co-pays for diabetes medications and supplies, and helped people manage their diabetes on a day-to-day basis with the help of a specially-trained pharmacist "coach." Between the initial visit

and the end of the evaluation period, the influenza vaccination rate increased from 32 percent to 65 percent. The project realized an average annual savings of almost \$1,100 in total health care costs per patient with improved understanding and use of medications when compared to projected costs if the program had not been implemented. Participants saved an average of almost \$600 per year.

Remember—health care providers can dramatically increase influenza vaccination rates by taking one simple step—strongly recommend a flu vaccine to all of your patients, especially those in high-risk groups.

